

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

Crim. Action No.: 1:20CR20-5  
(Judge KleeH)

ASHLEY NICHOLE BENNETT,

Defendant.

ORDER ADOPTING MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION  
CONCERNING PLEA OF GUILTY IN FELONY CASE [DKT. NO. 200],  
ACCEPTING GUILTY PLEA, AND SCHEDULING SENTENCING HEARING

On February 23, 2021, the Defendant Ashley Nichole Bennett ("Bennett"), appeared before United States Magistrate Judge Michael J. Aloï and moved for permission to enter a plea of **GUILTY** to Count Thirteen of the Superseding Indictment, charging her with Distribution of Five (5) Grams or More of Methamphetamine, in violation of Title 21, U.S.C., Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(B)(viii). This Court referred Defendant's plea of guilty to the magistrate judge for the purpose of administering the allocution, pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11, making a finding as to whether the plea was knowingly and voluntarily entered, and recommending to this Court whether the plea should be accepted. Bennett stated that she understood that the magistrate judge is not a United States District Judge, and Bennett consented to pleading before the magistrate judge.

USA v. BENNETT

1:20-CR-20-5

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Based upon Defendant Bennett's statements during the plea hearing and the Government's proffer establishing that an independent factual basis for the plea existed, the magistrate judge found that Defendant Bennett was competent to enter a plea, that the plea was freely and voluntarily given, that she was aware of the nature of the charges against her and the consequences of her plea, and that a factual basis existed for the tendered plea. The magistrate judge issued a *Report and Recommendation Concerning Plea of Guilty in Felony Case* ("R&R") [Dkt. No. 200] finding a factual basis for the plea and recommending that this Court accept Defendant Bennett's plea of guilty to Count Thirteen of the Superseding Indictment.

The magistrate judge also directed the parties to file any written objections to the R&R within fourteen (14) days after service of the R&R. He further advised that failure to file objections would result in a waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of this Court based on the R&R. Neither the Defendant nor the Government filed objections to the R&R.

Accordingly, this Court **ADOPTS** the magistrate judge's R&R [Dkt. No. 200], provisionally **ACCEPTS** Defendant Bennett's guilty

USA v. BENNETT

1:20-CR-20-5

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plea, and **ADJUDGES** her **GUILTY** of the crime charged in Count Thirteen of the Superseding Indictment.

Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(c)(3) and U.S.S.G. § 6B1.1(c), the Court **DEFERS** acceptance of the proposed plea agreement until it has received and reviewed the presentence investigation report prepared in this matter.

Pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 6A1 et seq., the Court **ORDERS** the following:

1. The Probation Officer shall undertake a presentence investigation of Bennett, and prepare a presentence investigation report for the Court;

2. The Government and Defendant Bennett shall each provide their narrative descriptions of the offense to the Probation Officer by **March 22, 2021**;

3. The presentence investigation report shall be disclosed to Defendant Bennett, counsel for Defendant, and the Government on or before **May 21, 2021**; however, the Probation Officer shall not disclose any sentencing recommendations made pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 32(e)(3);

4. Counsel may file written objections to the presentence investigation report on or before **June 4, 2021**;

USA v. BENNETT

1:20-CR-20-5

ORDER ADOPTING MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION  
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ACCEPTING GUILTY PLEA, AND SCHEDULING SENTENCING HEARING

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5. The Office of Probation shall submit the presentence investigation report with addendum to the Court on or before **June 18, 2021**; and

6. Counsel may file any written sentencing memorandum or statements and motions for departure from the Sentencing Guidelines, including the factual basis for the same, on or before **June 28, 2021**.

The magistrate judge remanded Defendant Bennett to the custody of the United States Marshals Service.

The Court will conduct the **Sentencing Hearing** for Defendant on **July 12, 2021**, at **1:30 P.M.**, at the **Clarksburg, West Virginia** point of holding court. If counsel anticipates having multiple witnesses or an otherwise lengthy sentencing hearing, please notify the Judge's chamber staff so that an adequate amount of time can be scheduled.

It is so **ORDERED**.

USA v. BENNETT

1:20-CR-20-5

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ACCEPTING GUILTY PLEA, AND SCHEDULING SENTENCING HEARING

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The Clerk is directed to transmit copies of this Order to  
counsel of record and all appropriate agencies.

DATED: March 11, 2021

/s/ Thomas S. Kleeh  
THOMAS S. KLEEH  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE